

AIR POUCH

SECRET
SECURITY INFORMATION

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EMBASSY, VIENNA

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October 16, 1952

3 enclosures

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Visit of Soviet Repatriation Mission to the United States Zone

Following an exchange of notes with the Soviet Element, permission was granted for a Soviet Repatriation Mission to visit designated "free-living" and "in-camp" refugees who are Soviet nationals resident in the United States Zone. The four members of the Soviet Mission crossed the demarkation line at Enns on September 22 and returned to the same point on September 28, 1952.

The Mission was escorted at all times both by the Displaced Persons officers in Linz and Salzburg, USFA escort personnel and was observed around the clock by other detailed personnel.

The Soviet Element had informed the Embassy that in addition to visiting its nationals for the purpose of giving such of them as so desired an opportunity to be repatriated, it also wished to exhibit Soviet films to its nationals and to give them certain objective printed matter in the Russian language. The U.S. Element assented to these plans.

Of the 29 named persons that the Mission desired to visit, only two agreed to receive them. None indicated any interest at all in returning to the Soviet Union. The only interest in repatriation was found at Garston Prison where nine long-term prisoners apparently decided it would be more exciting to move somewhere else than to continue to serve out their sentences where they are. This is an old story and the prisoners almost unanimously stated that although they continued to desire repatriation they had made the same declaration of choice to each of the two previous Missions and nothing had so far developed in accordance with their expressed wishes.

The Mission experienced very considerable difficulty in endeavoring to exhibit films publicly as no theater wished to accommodate them. They finally resorted to rented equipment and showing of films in camps themselves to audiences composed largely of small children.

The only incident that caused trouble pertained to the type of literature being handed out by the Mission. One of the pamphlets was found to contain violent anti-American propaganda. This was pointed out and the balance of the material that had not been distributed was turned over by the Soviets to the Displaced Persons officer in Linz.

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State Dept. declassification instructions on file

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Disp. No. 697

From: Embassy, Vienna

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It is presumed that the Department will have had made available to it in the normal course, a copy of the secret CIC report dated September 29, 1952 (Reference No. S-15032) which will give full details regarding the visit. Certain extracts from this report are attached as enclosures, principally because they seem to have political interest.

Although the members of the Soviet's Mission expressed themselves as being entirely satisfied and, in fact, pleased with the manner of their reception, the Soviet High Commissioner, in a note to the United States High Commissioner, dated October 2, 1952, listed five unfavorable factors that in his opinion influenced the working conditions of the Mission during their stay in the U.S. Zone. A copy of this letter together with a copy of the U.S. High Commissioner's reply, dated October 13, is enclosed for the Department's information.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

Walter Dowling
Walter Dowling
Deputy High Commissioner

Enclosures 3:

1. Extracts from CIC report dated September 29, 1952
2. Letter from Soviet High Commissioner to U.S. High Commissioner dated October 2, 1952
3. Letter from U.S. High Commissioner to Soviet High Commissioner dated October 13, 1952

cc: Country Unit, Wells
DP office, Salzburg
DP office, Linz